



Mailman E-Mail Lists Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

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What is an e-mail mailing list?

An e-mail mailing list is an efficient means of communicating with a group of people repeatedly. When sending e-mail messages to the group, instead of manually entering each recipient's address, the sender need only type a single address, commonly referred to as the "list name." A mailing list application of some kind then populates all the addresses associated with the list name. In this way, an e-mail message can be sent to a large group very efficiently, with little chance of typographical errors or errors of omission.

E-mail lists may be used to distribute announcements to a large number of people but not allow them to respond, in which case it may be called an "announcement-only e-mail list." Or, a list may be used to facilitate a group discussion conducted via e-mail, in which multiple members of the group address the whole at will (a "discussion e-mail list").

The people that a list reaches are called "members" of the list. The person that controls how the list works is called the "list owner." (See also [What is a list owner?](#))

What is Mailman?

Mailman is a mailing list management application, which allows list owners to manage their lists directly through the use of a Web interface. It supports a wide range of types of mailing lists, such as general discussion lists and announcement-only lists and has extensive privacy control features.

What is a list owner?

The list owner is both a point of contact for a specific list as well as the person who specifies how a list shall operate, based on a variety of configuration settings. For example, the list owner specifies, through the Mailman interface, whether or not she or he will review and approve individual messages sent to the entire list. The list owner specifies whether she or he will review requests from people who would like to join the mailing list, or automatically grant access to anyone who requests it.

When should someone use the Mailman List Service?

You may want to [request the creation of a new Mailman list](#) under the following conditions:

- Your distribution list is large. Mailman lists can accommodate an unlimited number of recipients.
- Your distribution list contains people who are in the NOMAD Global Address List and some who are not.
- Others will need to be able to send to the list.

Who has access to mailman?

Only list owners interact with the Mailman application. General users will find simple instructions for common functions related to the list -- such as unsubscribing or sending a message to the whole list -- at the bottom of each message they receive from the list.

How do I request the creation of a new Mailman list?

Any Headquarters Civil Servant or support service contractor may request a mailing list in NAMS:

1. Log into IdMAX: <http://itcd.hq.nasa.gov/idmax.html> | Click **Access Management**.

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2. Under **NAMS Request**, click **Request or Modify Application Account**.
3. Enter the requested information on the **User**, **Requester**, and **Sponsor** tabs.
4. On the **Applications** tab, in the text box at the top, enter the search term, “mailman” | to the right of that, select **All NAMS Resources** | To the right of that, select **All Centers** | Click **Search**.
5. When **HQ Mailman List** appears, click **Add to Request**.
6. Under **Request Details**, enter the following information in the text box:
 - Name of the list (See [Is there a convention for naming new lists?](#))
 - Name of list owner(s)
 - E-mail address of list owner(s). List owners must have nasa.gov e-mail addresses.
7. Below the text box, select how long you would like the mail list to run: 12 months, 3 months, 6 months, More than 12 months.
8. Select the date you would like the mail list to start.
9. Under **Backup Owner**, in the text box, enter the e-mail address of the backup owner.
10. Next to **Urgency**, select **Normal**.
11. Provide a Business Justification (purpose of the list) in the text box | Click **Continue to Submit**.

Is there a convention for naming new lists?

Yes. The list name must follow some simple conventions:

- List name format:
 - listname@lists.hq.nasa.gov or
 - listname@hq.nasa.gov
- Restrict the characters in the list name to alphabetic characters, digits [0-9], and hyphens (-).
- If the list name is composed of multiple words, the words should be separated by hyphens.
- Generally, self-documenting descriptive words (e.g. Airframe-Icing@lists.hq.nasa.gov) are preferred as list names versus abbreviations (e.g. AI@lists.hq.nasa.gov).
- If the list is specific to a center or program, use the center or program name as a list name prefix, e.g.: jsc-list-users@lists.hq.nasa.gov, ifmp-announcements@lists.hq.nasa.gov, grc-cafeteria-committee@lists.hq.nasa.gov.
- If the list is about a well-known agency-wide topic, a prefix might not be required.
- E-mail addresses are case insensitive, but the list administrator may adjust the case of the list name after it is created through the list administration web pages. This allows addresses to be displayed as "KSC-Project-Name" rather than "ksc-project-name", if desired.

How do list owners access Mailman?

Go to <https://lists.hq.nasa.gov/mailman/admin/LISTNAME> where “LISTNAME” is the name of your list. In the **List Administrator’s Password** text box, enter your password.

List owners can access Mailman from within Headquarters or via remote access such as Secure Nomadic Access (SNA) or Virtual Private Network (VPN).

How are Mailman e-mail lists managed at Headquarters?

Mailman list owners can control many aspects of how the list operates, and configure it directly using the Mailman interface: <http://itcd.hq.nasa.gov/mailman.html>. For example, list owners can add and delete mailing list members themselves, without having to submit a NAMS request to make those changes. List owners can specify whether or not to review messages before they are sent to the entire list, and can control whether to review or automatically grant requests to join the list.

When a message is addressed to a list, what happens to it?

When a message is addressed to the list, it is matched against a number of criteria which determine whether or not the message is actually posted (sent) to the list. In general, messages addressed to a list can be:

Action	Description
Approved/Accepted	The message may be sent on to the members of the mailing list.
Held	The message is held for approval. The list owners then have to approve the message before the list members will see it.
Rejected	The message is bounced back to the original sender, often with a notice containing the reason the message was rejected. The list members never see rejected messages.
Discarded	The message is simply thrown away without further processing.

What do I need to know as a new Mailman list owner?

Acquaint yourself with the Mailman application, and read through this FAQ. If you haven't already done so, review the documentation and training options available at the [Mailman GNU Web page](#).

Because you can institute changes immediately and easily in Mailman, it is generally safe for you to explore the application directly. However, there are several configuration settings it is important for you to approach with caution. See [As a list owner, how can I protect the list from spam?](#)

As a list owner, what privacy options must I set?

The Privacy category allows the list owner to control how much of the list's information is public, as well as who can send messages to the list. It also contains some spam detection filters. There are four areas in which the list owner sets options to regulate a list:

Option	Description
Subscription rules	Rules for joining and leaving a mailing list.
Sender filters	Rules for who may post messages to a mailing list.
Recipient filters	Moderation rules based on the recipient of the message.
Spam filters	Some regular expression based rules for header matching.

Who can be a member of a mailman list?

Unlike NOMAD Distribution Lists, Mailman lists accommodate internal and external addresses (i.e., Mailman lists are not restricted to ‘nasa.gov’ addresses) and can accommodate an unlimited number of recipients. The list owner is the final arbiter of who may or may not be a member.

As a list owner, how do I add people to the list?

Mailman allows a list manager to add people for their mail list:

1. Access your list management screen: Go to <https://lists.hq.nasa.gov/mailman/admin/LISTNAME> where “LISTNAME” is the name of your list | Enter your password.
2. In the left-most column, click on **Membership Management**. Three new submenus appear.
3. Click on the **Mass Subscription** submenu. (The procedure to add one member is similar to the procedure to add one hundred.)
4. In the large blank box, beneath the words **Enter one address per line below...**, type or paste the email address(es) you would like to add to the list. Enter each address on a separate line.
5. Note the options for welcoming new members directly above this area. If you mark the **yes** button next to the question, **Send welcome messages to new subscribers?**, new members receive their password (if relevant) and list configuration instructions.
6. At the bottom of the screen, click **Submit your changes**.

As a list owner, how do I remove someone from the list?

1. Access your list management screen: Go to <https://lists.hq.nasa.gov/mailman/admin/LISTNAME> where “LISTNAME” is the name of your list | Enter your password.
2. In the left-most column, click on **Membership Management**. The Membership List appears beneath the first blue bar.
3. Find the record of the e-mail address or individual that you would like to remove.
4. Remove the check mark in the left-most column labeled **subscr**.
5. At the bottom of the page, click **Submit your changes**. Your changes take effect immediately.

As a list owner, how do I control who joins the list?

Mailman allows you to prevent persons from joining your list without your explicit approval. To activate this feature:

1. Access your list management screen: Go to <https://lists.hq.nasa.gov/mailman/admin/LISTNAME> where “LISTNAME” is the name of your list | Enter your password.
2. In the second column of menu options, click on **Privacy Options**.
3. Beneath the blue bar called **Privacy Options**, there is a gray section with the following question: **What steps are required for subscription?** Choose one of the following:

Option	Description
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Confirm	Causes Mailman to send the requester an e-mail requiring that they confirm their intent to join the list and verify their e-mail address. If you do not wish to monitor or control who joins the list, choose this option.
Require approval	Causes Mailman to send you an e-mail notice whenever someone sends a request to join your list. The notice directs you to an online form to accept or reject their request.
Confirm and approve	Initiates a two-step process whereby Mailman (first) sends the requester an e-mail requiring that they confirm their intent to join the list and verify their e-mail address, and only then (second) sends you an e-mail notice stating that someone has sent a request to join the list. As usual, the notice directs you to an online form to accept or reject their request.

4. At the bottom of the screen, click **Submit your changes**. Your changes take effect immediately.

As a list owner, how do I control who can send messages to the list?

Settings, which are interdependent, determine whether your list is:

- **Moderated:** You as list owner review and approve all messages sent to the whole list.
- **Un-moderated:** Anyone can post a message to the list without censor.

Settings	Description
Must posts be approved by an administrator?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes: Postings are held and the administrator is notified of their existence. They may then approve or reject postings via the Web interface. • No: Postings to the list are immediately delivered to list membership.
Restrict posting privilege to list members? (<i>member_posting_only</i>)	Under nearly all circumstances this should be set to yes . This restriction causes Mailman to hold for administrative review all posts to the list that do not originate from a list member. In general, setting this to yes prevents misuse of the list by spammers. Note: There is a use to setting this to no, see the chart below.
Addresses of members accepted for posting to this list without implicit approval requirement.	This setting can be used to designate posting privileges to persons who are not subscribers to the list. It may also be used to specify persons who are exclusively allowed to post. See the chart below for explanation.

As a list owner, how can I help to protect the list from spam?

Strangely enough, while there is no need for you to alter any of the settings under the Spam submenu, several other innocuous-sounding settings found elsewhere are vitally important. Please use caution when approaching these settings!

Strongly Recommended Settings found under Privacy Options | Subscription Rules

<i>Membership exposure</i>	
Who can view subscription list? (Details for private roster)	<input type="radio"/> Anyone <input type="radio"/> List members <input checked="" type="radio"/> List admin only
Show member addresses so they're not directly recognizable as email addresses? (Details for obscure addresses)	<input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes

1. Access your list management screen: Go to <https://lists.hq.nasa.gov/mailman/admin/LISTNAME> where "LISTNAME" is the name of your list | Enter your password.
2. In the second column of menu options, click on **Privacy Options**. Four sub-menus appear.
3. Click on **Subscription Rules**.
4. Beneath the words "Membership exposure," near the bottom, you will find the grey section titled, **Who can view subscription list?** Choose one of the following:

Option	Description
ANYONE IS NOT AN ACCEPTABLE OPTION. DO NOT SELECT IT.	Choosing Anyone allows any person or service running on the World Wide Web to harvest the e-mail addresses of your list members.
List members	Allows all members of the list to see other members by their full names. This may be an acceptable option, if the privacy of individual members is not an issue.
List admin only	Gives you, as list owner, the maximum amount of control and is also an acceptable option.

5. The next grey section asks the following: **Show member addresses so they're not directly recognizable as email addresses?**
6. Choose one of the following:

Option	Description
Yes	Protects your list members from spammers.
No	Allows the permitted viewers of the member list to see full e-mail addresses. This is not advisable in most circumstances.

7. Having made your selections, click **Submit Your Changes**.

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Strongly Recommended Settings found under Privacy Options | Recipient Filters

<i>Recipient filters</i>	
Must posts have list named in destination (to, cc) field (or be among the acceptable alias names, specified below)? (Details for require explicit destination)	<input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Yes

1. Access your list management screen: Go to <https://lists.hq.nasa.gov/mailman/admin/LISTNAME> where “LISTNAME” is the name of your list | Enter your password.
2. In the second column of menu options, click **Privacy Options**. Four sub-menus appear.
3. Click **Recipient Filters**.
4. Beneath **Recipient Filters**, there is a gray section asking the following: **Must posts have list named in destination (to, cc) field (or be among the acceptable alias names, specified below)?** This is asking if it is acceptable for people to address messages to the whole list, placing the list name only in the bcc (blind carbon copy) field. There are few legitimate reasons for doing so, and many reasons why spammers prefer to do so.

At the time of this writing (July 2013), the default value for this setting is NOT the preferred option. **Select Yes.**

5. Click **Submit Your Changes**.

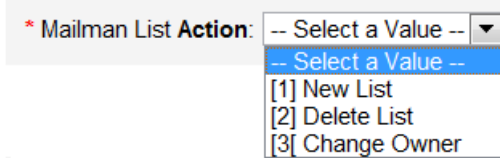
As a list owner, how do I delete a single list?

The process is different depending on whether you want to delete one of your lists, or whether you want to delete all your lists. The steps below describe how to delete just one of your lists.

Important:

- If you want to delete all of your lists, see [As a list owner, how do I delete all my lists?](#)
- If the list is still needed, but you no longer want to be the owner, see [How do you change list ownership?](#)

1. Copy and save any list archives you may wish to refer to later, as all list data, including the names of all list members, are deleted when the list itself is deleted.
2. Log into IdMAX: <http://itcd.hq.nasa.gov/idmax.html> | Click **Access Management**.
3. Under **NAMS Request**, click **Request or Modify Application Account**.
4. Under **Assigned Application(s)**, locate **HQ Mailman List** | To the right, click **Modify**.
5. Under **Request Details**, in the text box, enter the following information:
 - Name of the list you would like to delete.
 - Date you would like this to occur.
6. Next to **Mailman List Action**, select **Delete List**.

A screenshot of a web form element labeled '* Mailman List Action:'. It features a dropdown menu with the text '-- Select a Value --' at the top. The menu is open, showing three options: '[1] New List', '[2] Delete List', and '[3] Change Owner'. The first option is highlighted in blue.

7. Next to **Urgency**, select **Normal**.
8. Next to **Business Justification**, provide a brief explanation for why the list is being deleted.
9. Click **Continue to Submit** | Review your application request details | Click **Submit Request**.

As a list owner, how do I delete all my lists?

The process is different depending on whether you want to delete one of your lists, or whether you want to delete all your lists. The steps below describe how to delete multiple lists.

Important:

- If you want to delete just one of your lists, see [As a list owner, how do I delete a single list?](#)
- If the list is still needed, but you no longer want to be the owner, see [How do you change list ownership?](#)

1. Copy and save any list archives you may wish to refer to later, as all list data, including the names of all list members, are deleted when the list itself is deleted.
2. Log into IdMAX: <http://itcd.hq.nasa.gov/idmax.html> | Click **Close Application Account**.
3. Scroll down, under **Application to Close**, check the box next to the list names you want to close.
4. Next to **Business Justification**, enter the following information in the text box:
 - DELETE ALL MAILMAN LISTS: [Provide list names]
 - Reason for deletion of list
5. Click **Continue** | Review your application request details | Click **Submit Request**.

As a list owner, can I correct capitalization in the list name?

Email addresses are case insensitive, but the list admin may adjust the case of the list name after it is created through the list administration Web pages. For example, you can ensure that messages sent from the list called “hq-project-name” are displayed as coming from “HQ-Project-Name” in their inbox.

1. Go to the General Option page of the Mailman interface for your mailing list.
2. In the **Value** text box for `real_name`, change the case for the text.
3. At the bottom of the page, click **Submit Your Changes**.

What happens to a list when the owner checks out of HQ?

Before a list owner is terminated, the IT POC must determine whether the list is still needed. If it is, a new owner must be identified.

Once the list owner’s information is taken out of the system, there is no way to determine mail

list ownership or organization.

1. The list owner's IT POC, AO, or COTR reaches out to the organization, or the backup, and determine who the new owner will be.
2. The user's IT POC, AO, or COTR submits a NAMS HQ Off-Boarding request:
<http://itcd.hq.nasa.gov/idmax.html>
3. NAMS notifies the HITSS UNIX team of a user's termination date.
4. The UNIX Team contacts the user or their IT POC, AO, or COTR to determine if the list should remain active with new ownership, or if the list should be deleted.
5. The UNIX team closes out the NAMS request after completing the request.
6. NAMS notifies the requestor confirming the request is complete.

How do you change list ownership?

To request ownership change:

1. Log into IdMAX: <http://itcd.hq.nasa.gov/idmax.html> | Click **Access Management**.
2. Under **NAMS Request**, click **Request or Modify Application Account**.
3. Enter the requested information on the **User**, **Requester**, and **Sponsor** tabs.
4. On the **Applications** tab, in the text box at the top, enter the search term, "mailman" | to the right of that, select **All NAMS Resources** | To the right of that, select **All Centers** | Click **Search**.
5. When **HQ Mailman List** appears, click **Add to Request**.
6. Under **Request Details**, enter the following information in the text box:
 - CHANGE OF LIST OWNERSHIP REQUEST
 - LIST NAME: [Name of the list]
 - OWNER NAME TO REMOVE: [Name of list owner(s) to remove]
 - OWNER E-MAIL TO REMOVE: [E-mail addresses of list owners to remove]
 - NEW LIST OWNER(S) NAME: [Name of new list owner(s)]
 - NEW LIST OWNER(S) E-MAIL: [E-mail address(es) of new list owner(s)] (List owners must have nasa.gov e-mail addresses)
7. Next to **Urgency**, select **Normal** | Click **Submit**.

How do I contact the list owner if I don't know who the list owner is?

Send an e-mail to LISTNAME-owner@list.nasa.gov. For example, to reach the list owner of a list called HQ-Tuesdays, you would address your request to HQ-Tuesdays-owner@list.nasa.gov.

How do I subscribe to a list if I don't know who the owner is?

If you know the list name, you can send an e-mail to LISTNAME-subscribe@list.nasa.gov. For example, to subscribe to a list called HQ-Tuesdays, you would send an e-mail addressed to HQ-Tuesdays-subscribe@list.nasa.gov. Your request may be processed by a machine, or may be read by a

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human being, so it's probably best to fill-in the subject line and a brief message as to why you'd like to be on the mailing list in the body of your e-mail request.

Your request may be routed to the list owner for his or her consideration, or you may be automatically subscribed (in which case you would receive a confirmation e-mail to that effect), depending on the configuration policy set by the list owner.

What if I forget my Mailman password?

If you are a list owner, you may be able to retrieve your password by finding the original e-mail message you received when the list was first set-up. This message would have come from mailman-owner@lists.hq.nasa.gov.

If you can't find this e-mail and need to have your password reset, contact the Enterprise Service Desk (ESD): Submit a ticket online at esd.nasa.gov, or call 358-HELP (4357) or 1-866-4NASAHQ (462-7247). Remember to include the name of your list in your request.

How do I change my password?

List owners may change their password as follows:

1. Access your list management screen. (Go to <https://lists.hq.nasa.gov/mailman/admin/LISTNAME> where "LISTNAME" is the name of your list. Enter your password.)
2. Click **Passwords**, the second option in the left-most column.
3. In the **Enter new administrator password** text field, enter your new password, and then enter it again to confirm.
4. Click **Submit Your Changes**.

Is training available?

Yes. The HITSS Customer Support Team contacts new list owners to offer training. List owners may contact the HITSS Customer Support Team directly for training at any time at extension 0650 or by e-mail at csat@hq.nasa.gov.

Where can I learn more about Mailman?

Visit the Mailman E-Mail List Service Web page for more information:
<http://itcd.hq.nasa.gov/mailman.html>

For assistance, contact the Enterprise Service Desk (ESD): Submit a ticket online at esd.nasa.gov, or call 358-HELP (4357) or 1-866-4NASAHQ (462-7247).

This document is posted on the ITCD Web site at:
<http://itcd.hq.nasa.gov/faqs.html>